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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000676

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KUNC](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [PK](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: AA/S FELTMAN DISCUSSES IRAN, IRAQ WITH PRIME
MINISTER

REF: KUWAIT 647

Classified By: A/DCM Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and d

11. (C) Summary: During a June 30 meeting between the Prime Minister and AA/S Feltman, the PM:
-- urged ongoing dialogue with Iran, despite recent events, and the avoidance of any military option, notwithstanding his pessimistic outlook on Iran's nuclear program and the prospects for any opening up by the regime;
-- Insisted on the need for Iraq to take tangible steps to demonstrate its commitment to UNSCR 833, offering his own travel to Iraq in return;
-- Sought AA/S Feltman's views on any progress on Israeli/Palestine issues;
-- Applauded Pakistan's efforts to crack down on AQ domestically.
End Summary.

Seeking Dialogue With Recalcitrant Iran

12. (C) AA/S Feltman, during a June 30 call on Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Al-Jaber Al Sabah, acknowledged the PM's long experience as Ambassador to Iran and sought his views on post-election violence in that country and on how the USG can most effectively engage Iran. Despite the post-election problem, the President, Feltman noted, is committed to dialogue with Iran, but seeks the views of Kuwait and other partners on how best to push that aim forward given the absence of a direct USG presence in Iran since 1979. Feltman noted that Iran has not, so far, been responsive to direct USG offers for direct diplomatic engagement or to an invitation from the P5 1 for direct talks. Feltman reassured the PM that the USG's desire to engage Iran does not imply any shift in commitment to its GCC partners.

13. (C) The PM, joined in the meeting by his advisor and former Minister for Cabinet Affairs Faisal Al-Hajji and by MFA Undersecretary Khaled Al-Jarallah, offered his assessment (note: shared by others within the GOK. End note) that Khamenei, whom he referred to as the "Murshad" would prevail, comparing events in Iran to Mao Zedong's consolidation of power in China following the so-called "cultural revolution." The PM suggested that any hope for regime change in Iran was futile. He supported the President's effort to engage Iran and urged the U.S. to explore all options leading to a resolution of bilateral tensions "no matter how many meetings it requires." The GOK opposes any military action against Iran and sees no alternative to dialogue, he said. The PM acknowledged GOK concerns about Iran's nuclear program -- including its civilian nuclear energy program -- noting that its facilities at Bushehr and several other sites create the specter of a "Three Mile Island-type event."

14. (C) Turning briefly to the "inevitability" of Kuwait's

reliance on nuclear energy, given the finite nature of their oil reserves, the PM said that Kuwait has held discussions recently with the French, who had assured them that safe programs could be managed within Kuwait's small geographic area; "and you know," he added, "that the French are the most experienced in this field." Acknowledging AA/S Feltman's comment that development of a civil nuclear program by a "responsible" state like Kuwait did not raise the same concerns as did such development by Iran, the PM suggested -- without offering any supporting evidence -- that Iran will eventually "yield" to international pressure to rein in its nuclear program. At the same time, the PM -- apparently contradicting himself -- told Feltman that he did not believe Iran would accept international supervision of its nuclear program or even "compromise" on its aims.

GOK Needs Tangible Steps On Border from Iraq

¶5. (C) Turning to Iraq, the PM reiterated comments made to AA/S Feltman earlier in the day by Amiri Adviser Mohammed Abulhassan (Septel) concerning Kuwait's need for tangible signs from Iraq that it accepts the inviolability of the UNSCR 833-designated common border and that these steps must include the removal of Iraqi farmers from Kuwaiti territory and the maintenance of existing border markers, which the PM specified meant maintaining just four specific pillars. When such steps are completed, the PM added, he would be prepared to visit Iraq "for five days, even; Baghdad, the Kurdish area, Sistani in Najaf; and Basra", but not before. Feltman, in response, assured the PM that the UN and U.S. are both committed to UNSCR 833 and have no intention of re-opening

KUWAIT 00000676 002 OF 002

any of the points covered under that resolution; the land border is inviolable. The U.S., Feltman added, agrees with the GOK that Iraq must take tangible steps to show that 833 is being implemented "in fact and on the ground." The U.S. is supporting efforts by UN Special Representative to the Secgen Staffan de Mistura on steps that would provide tangible assurances to Kuwait while, at the same time, avoid inflaming populist rhetoric in Iraq.

Two-State Solution

¶6. (C) Turning to other regional issues, AA/S Feltman noted continuing U.S. efforts to support the framework for a two-state solution through generous contributions to the Palestinian Authority, including preparation to transfer USD 200 million in cash to the PA budget. Feltman noted that it is important that such contributions provide the wherewithal for PA employees in Gaza to keep some level of economic activity going. Feltman noted with approval Palestinian Authority President Abbas's commitment to keeping economic activity in Gaza going, notwithstanding his government's differences with Hamas. In response to a query from the PM about U.S. relations with Hamas, Feltman confirmed that the U.S. "has no relations with Hamas." "We are throwing our efforts behind the PA," he noted, in the belief that the sooner the Palestinians "have a government that acts like a government," the sooner a viable Palestinian state will exist. Noting the President's commitment to moving towards a two-state solution and a comprehensive Middle East peace, Feltman told the PM that trying to work out our differences with Syria through direct talks is an important part of this strategy.

¶7. (C) The PM raised Pakistan, noting with approval that, for the first time, the GOP was deploying its military against Al Qaida in Pakistan, comparing it to Sri Lankan efforts to contain the Tamils. AA/S Feltman, while noting that Afghanistan/Pakistan do not fall specifically within his brief, expressed appreciation for the humanitarian and other assistance the GOK has provided to this region.

Friends In Need, Friends Indeed

¶8. (C) Wrapping up the meeting, AA/S Feltman assured the PM of U.S. appreciation for our long friendship with Kuwait and of our desire to build on the existing partnership; we look forward to the Amir's August 3 meeting with POTUS in Washington as a means to this end. The PM, in turn, expressed deep appreciation for U.S. friendship, noting that "when we needed you, you liberated us."

Comment

¶9. (C) The PM offered no surprises or new thinking on either Iran or Iraq. The GOK remains deeply opposed to provoking Iran, given Kuwait's vulnerable geopolitical situation, and as always prefers a co-optive, consensual approach. His comments on Iraq reflect widespread and abiding Kuwaiti paranoia that the border issue, if not clearly resolved now while the U.S. still holds major cards in the game, will come back to haunt them sometime in the future, in a reprise of the events of 1990.

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